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ABSTRACT

Brief guidelines for effective organization and administration of graduate schools are presented in this policy statement. It is stated that to establish the proper environment for the advancement of learning, a primary responsibility of graduate schools, administrators must provide for: freedom of inquiry and expression, effective academic organization for graduate programs, resources and facilities required for graduate study, and the long and honored tradition of quality in academic scholarship associated with graduate study. Each of these items are summarized, along with specific topics such as the choice of faculty, essential functions of a graduate school (approval of new degree porgrams, student admission, and recommendations of degree recipients), and basic guidelines for effective governance. (SPG)

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The Organization of Graduate Study Within the University

A POLICY STATEMENT

The Council of Graduate Schools in the United States

FOREWORD

The following brief statement is presented in the hope that it may serve as a guide to effective organization and administration of graduate schools. The paper was written by John K. Major, Frederick N. Andrews, Otis H. Shao, and Thomas C. Rumble, then graduate deans of New York University, Purdue University, University of the Pacific, and Wayne State University respectively.

Suggestions from our Committee on Publications have also been incorporated. This statement has been approved and is published by the Executive Committee of the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States.

J. Boyd Page
President

The graduate school has as its primary responsibility the advancement of learning through scholarly research and instruction and recognizes the achievement of this goal by the awarding of advanced degrees. The master's degree is an academic award which recognizes successful completion of post-baccalaureate study in preparation for scholarly and professional activities. The doctor's degree is an academic award which recognizes achievement in advanced studies that equips the recipient for creative scholarship and research, either in the traditional academic disciplines or in the professions. Typically, the graduate school does not administer programs leading to the professional doctorates, such as M.D. or D.V.M., although many professional master's degrees, such as M. Eng. and M.B.A., may come under its purview.

To establish the environment for the advancement of learning, administrators must provide for: freedom of inquiry and expression, effective academic organization for graduate programs, resources and facilities required for graduate study, and the long and honored tradition of quality in academic scholarship associated with graduate study.

The last point, as self-evident as it may seem, must be borne into the consciousness of all — faculty, students, staff — who are engaged in the graduate enterprise and ought to be reflected in their attitudes and aspirations. All attributes of graduate programs should reflect and promote quality in academic scholarship. The control of program quality is essential; departments, whether new or long-established, benefit from periodic reviews by outside scholars responsible both to their institutions and to the world of scholarship in general.

Choice of faculty is the key to the quality of the program. The departmental graduate faculty must contain a core of well-qualified individuals in the relevant discipline, along with a group of appropriately trained specialists in fields of narrower interest, all buttressed by a strong supporting faculty in other related departments. An acceptable graduate program cannot be developed by one or two scholars in intellectual isolation, no matter how distinguished they may be individually. Scholarship, usually evidenced by publication, must be well established throughout the faculty.

A large number, probably the majority of, graduate schools have provisions for appointing or electing members to a graduate faculty using criteria developed by the graduate faculty, the graduate council, or some other body, always with the advice of the graduate dean. Membership on the graduate faculty usually presupposes attainment of the highest degree and demonstrated competence in teaching and research. The graduate dean and the department chairperson should determine that members of the graduate faculty who serve as major professors have adequate preparation and experience for this function.

The organization of graduate study varies considerably depending on such things as the size, setting, and traditions of the school; but certain indispensable elements are common to most institutions. Graduate study depends to a large extent upon academic specialization. Academic expertise resides in the departments, but boundaries between many disciplines are becoming increasingly diffuse. Therefore, some administrative decentralization or specialization may be necessary where related disciplines and and departments may be treated collectively as administrative units within the graduate administration. Departments and disciplinary prerogatives, however, must be flexible and subject to review. Faculty and students should be encouraged to explore innovative interdepartmental arrangements as the frontiers of knowledge shift and new problems require new alliances among the specialists.

Whatever the organizational structure, three functions should be regarded as essential for any graduate school or division: approval of new degree programs, admission of students, and recommendations of degree recipients. Other key elements — which, if they are not found in the school, must be related to it — include: decisions on program quality and student progress, maintenance of academic records, allocation of student financial assistance, support of faculty research, and oversight of sponsored research. For reasons of efficiency, economy, and convenience, most schools rely on the central administration of the university for accounting, data processing, registration, library resources, and other such services.

The same departmental organization usually serves the undergraduate and graduate schools. The graduate school is headed by a dean who is generally consulted on bud-

getary, promotion, and tenure decisions concerning those who teach or direct at the graduate level. The dean's budgetary responsibilities are, however, usually limited to office operations, to fellowships and scholarships, and to research. Policy decisions affecting graduate education are made jointly by a faculty committee and the dean, although the most important issues are commonly referred by them to the whole faculty.

Proposals to offer new graduate degree programs are usually initiated by the departmental faculty, reviewed and approved by the graduate committee or council and the dean before being submitted to the faculty council or senate. They are then forwarded through the president to the governing board and, increasingly, to state authorities responsible for coordinating graduate education. Student participation, sometimes advisory but often with voting rights, has been found to be effective at some institutions.

Effective structural arrangements for good governance abound in such variety that generalization is difficult; however, the following basic guidelines are recommended:

1. Graduate education should be directed by a dean reporting to the president or the chief academic officer. The dean should be a major participant in all budget, space, and personnel decisions affecting graduate education and should be responsible for the admission and graduation of students and the approval or disapproval of new and continuing programs.
2. The instruction and examination of graduate students, together with supervision and evaluation of theses and dissertations, constitute a serious responsibility; it should be reserved to those faculty members whose training and experience qualify them.
3. Admission and degree requirements should be the joint responsibility of the graduate faculty (or a committee of that faculty) and the dean.
4. The graduate school should have a specified mechanism for the resolution of academic problems.
5. Graduate programs should be evaluated regularly as to academic quality, appropriateness, and direction and as to the utilization of institutional resources.
6. Policies concerning the character of the research used to fulfill the requirements for degrees should be the responsibility of the graduate faculty and graduate dean.

7. The impetus for the establishment of new programs or the discontinuation or consolidation of existing programs should be the responsibility of the graduate faculty and the dean based on the institutional goals for graduate education.

8. An overriding central function of a graduate dean is related to support of quality research and scholarship and maintenance of high standards by faculty and students alike.